



# Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 19:30 in Hilton Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr P. Balicki (Chairman), Cllr J. Capes, Cllr H. Chambers, Cllr R. Dulstone, Cllr R. Norton, Cllr C. Sarkies

**In attendance:** The Clerk (N. Webster), Phil Wood (Town Trust), Andy Bush (HAT) and 3 parishioners.

Meeting commenced 19:30

## Welcome & Introduction

Cllr P. Balicki introduced himself and welcomed attendees to the Annual Parish Meeting.

## Apologies

No apologies were received.

## To Approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that these minutes were approved as a true record.

## Annual Review of the Parish Council Business – Chairman’s Report for 2022/23

Report from the Chairman of Hilton Parish Council – Cllr Peter Balicki

The year started just after the election in May when we welcomed Councillors Capes, Dulstone, Sage and Sarkies to the Parish Council and said farewell to Councillors Barradell, Collard, Stott and Walker. More recently Councillor Dunk has stepped down and last month we welcomed Richard Norton to the Parish Council.

I hope all Councillors have enjoyed their time on the council to date, it has been great to see the newer councillors get involved in the various committees and working groups and I would take this opportunity to thank once again those who are no longer on the council, their help and support was much appreciated in the previous years. Also special thanks to Graham Barradell for all the unpaid work he undertook around the village as Parish Council maintenance person.

As Chairman I appreciate all the debate at meetings and thank the councillors and clerk for their support over the past year.

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Nicola Webster, Clerk, Hilton Parish Council  
10 Church End, Hilton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 9NJ  
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At District Council level we saw the election of Claire Tevlin as our representative, the Parish Council welcomes her attendance at our meetings and for the information she passes on to us. We have also seen our County Councillor, Doug Dew attend our meetings on a regular basis and I am grateful for the support he gives the village at County level.

The year has seen no restrictions on council meetings from Covid measures and I think I am correct in saying all public meetings have been held in person over the last 12 months.

Nicola Webster has continued to excel in her role of clerk and responsible financial officer. Nicola has ensured that the council meets its legislative requirements, that meetings are conducted in a proper manner and ensures the financial reports are available at any time.

Traffic items remain an area of concern in the village and although we have enjoyed a year of the HGV ban there are still commercial vehicles seen through the village from time to time and I am sure we will hear more from Andy from HAT on this subject later.

The Parish Council had a Local Highway Initiative Bid approved to reduce the speed limit across the Green from 40 to 30 mph.

The next bid submitted was for a new sign to be placed on the Papworth Bypass advising drivers in advance of the HGV ban on the Potton Road, this bid is going through the system. Speeding remains a concern and the Parish Council approached Parishioners on their views on a possible bid for a speed limit of 20mph across all roads in the village. We had a fantastic response of 163 replies with 78% of respondents in favour of the Parish Council taking this bid forward. Thank you to everyone who took the time to reply. Our bid will be submitted and then we wait to see if we are successful in this proposal.

I would take this opportunity to thank the various groups involved in traffic matters in the village including HAT and Speedwatch.

Maintaining the Green is one of the major areas of expenditure for the Parish Council. The grass has to be cut regularly, the trees are inspected annually to assess what maintenance is required to keep the public safe, and work is undertaken in the churchyard, village garden and ditches. The Parish Council is lucky to have Ian Stott as its Green Open Spaces Officer and Ian has agreed to continue in that role after stepping down as a Councillor. Ian arranges the annual tree inspections and works with the various contractors to select what work needs to be undertaken.

Ian also arranges the sessions of Ivy cutting, tree maintenance that can be undertaken safely and recently arranged for the trees that the Parish Council obtained under the Woodland Trust grant to be planted. Ian also advises on the locations for memorial trees.

In other tree news, I attended a feedback session regarding the completed A14 southern bypass and commented on the number of trees planted under the scheme that have died. It was pleasing to note that there is a programme of works by Highways England under way to replace many of those dead trees.

The dredging of the ponds was undertaken thanks to a grant secured by the Parish Council. This work was undertaken in consultation with Cambridgeshire County Councils flood resilience officer. The work could not have been undertaken without the support of the grant received although this did not include removal of the spoil. Action on this is still being considered with perhaps the ability to remove the spoil on a more cost-effective basis. If not



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the previous proposal of spreading this across the Wilderness will have to be re-examined. Toxicity tests have confirmed the spoil is not toxic but would need to be sifted before being spread. However, the Parish Council is hopeful that the local contractor expressing an interest in removing it will prove to be cost effective and this can be done once the ground in the Wilderness is a little firmer.

The firework display in November was fantastic and from what I can tell attendance was at a record level. The Parish Council thanks all those involved in making this event such a success.

There have been a couple of successful bids for equipment to be used to help getting people active including a fold away table tennis table and equipment and a Huntingdonshire District Council health inequalities grant that has provided funding for some cricket coaching and equipment, cookery courses, funding for tea/coffee on the Green for 20 Thursdays in the winter and other items of outdoor equipment.

Finally, as you may be aware the coronation of King Charles takes place on 6 May. The Village Hall are leading on organising events and I look forward to hearing further on this in their report. The Parish Council are holding, led by Councillor Sarkies, a litter picking event on 8 May.

I now look forward to receiving the reports from the Clerk and representatives of other groups within the village.

### Parish Council Financial Report for 2022/23

Nicola Webster presented the accounts from 2022/23 in her role as Responsible Financial Officer. She noted that the accounts were unaudited.

### Financial Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

- The precept amount increased to £31,550.
- The income from the Bonfire Night event was higher than expected at £2,633.
- The cost of payroll increased from £10,945 to £13,689. This is due to an additional payment of £1000 for 100 hours in lieu and the fact that the salary award for both 2021/22 and 2022/23 fell in the same financial year.
- The Council received a grant of £10,000 for the Health Inequalities Project. This will mainly be spent in the next financial year on initiatives such as cricket and cookery courses.
- The Council received a grant of £37,800 to dredge five ponds within the village. Most of this has been spent on the dredging contractor, but the remainder of the grant will be spent on removing the waste from the Wilderness once the ground is drier.
- The Council received a grant of £1,367 from the National Lottery to purchase a table tennis table and equipment.
- The Council received a donation from the Hilton Wildlife and Conservation Group of £691.55 to purchase a plastic bench, which has been placed by the bridge to the Wilderness.

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- Utility costs have increased from £1,927 to £2,599.
- The cost of the maintenance contract for the Green has increased from £7,920 to £8,727 but is well within the Council budget of £10,000.
- The cost of subscriptions seems to have increased from £206 to £604, but this is because the CAPALC invoice was paid in 2020/21 instead of 2021/22.
- The cost of the election was £163.
- The Council made several donations including £100 to the Community Garden for bird food, £213.50 to Hilton Action on Traffic for replacement batteries for the mobile speed indicating device and £60 to the Royal British Legion
- The reserves have not yet been agreed by the Council, but if the recommended amounts are earmarked, the general reserves will be at £7,393, which is lower than the agreed 50% of precept but higher than last year.

### 2023/24 Financial Year

- The Parish Council has resolved to increase the precept to £34,606, which is an increase of £3,056 or 9.7%, and the Band D contribution will increase from £69.34 to £76.73, which is an increase of 14p per household per week on average.
- The tax base has decreased from 455 to 451.
- The tax base is calculated by looking at the equivalent number of band D properties in the Parish, adding the number of houses due to be built and taking away those properties in receipt of council tax support or single person supplement.

## Reports from Village Groups including Hilton Town Trust, Hilton Feast Week, Hilton Village Hall, Hilton Action against Traffic and Hilton Community Garden

### Report from Town Trust – Phil Wood - Clerk

#### BACKGROUND

The village of Hilton benefits from land and assets endowed over the centuries. The most recent definition of the charities was confirmed by a Deed dated 1899, in which year the gross yearly income from land and cottages was £41.

We operate two Charities. The land and assets are held by the Estate Charity, the senior charity of the two.

The 1899 deed requires that half of the annual income of the Estate Charity goes to the Parish Church to be used for repairs to the building; the other half is paid to the second charity, the Town Charity to be spent for the general benefit of the village.

Both the Estate and Town Charities are administered by the Trustees and are chaired by the Revd David Busk.

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The Parish Council appoints two trustees, presently Malcolm Lynn and Rachel Lawton; and the Church appoints the other two trustees, currently Jenny Broom and Rachel Wood. Phil Wood is the Clerk.

Trustees publish the purposes of the Charity in Spectrum each year, and the wider public is informed by the Charity Commission's Directories. An annual report is sent to the Charity Commission.

### TOWN CHARITY REPORT FOR CALENDER YEARS 2022

At the beginning of 2022, the Town Charity held £24,877 in hand.

In 2022 income amounting to £5,000 was received from the Estate Charity & interest totalled £227. There was also a kind donation to the Cost-of-Living Support scheme of £200.

Although the Trustees have no specific mandate, a mix of grants are made under the general terms of the Deed including capital grants, educational grants, grants to organisations directly serving the needs of Hilton.

This year the Trustees arranged a scheme to offer support to villagers struggling with the rises in energy bills. This Cost-of-Living Support scheme provided £200 grants to individuals or families who needed the help. The first round of this scheme occurred in November and December 2022. A second round of support was offered in February and March 2023 (this will be reflected in next year's report). The offer was well received by recipients. The Trustees will review circumstances in the wider economy before deciding whether to repeat the scheme during the winter 2023.

Projects supported by the Town Charity in 2022 included:

	£
Cost of living support scheme	2200
Community Garden	350
Support for a young person to attend the World Scout Jamboree	400

The Town Charity had £26,975 in hand at 31/12/22 with an expected income for 2023 of £5,000.

As always the Trustees remain open to proposals from villagers for either individual needs or community projects. Contact can be made with the Clerk, any Trustee, via the contact number in Spectrum or on [hiltontowntrust@gmail.com](mailto:hiltontowntrust@gmail.com)

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Report from Hilton Feast Week Committee – Nicola Webster – Chair

Feast Week 2022 was a great success, and it was wonderful to have the marquee back again. The committee would like to thank everyone that contributed and volunteered. This year we have two new committee members, which brings us to a total of twelve. Fundraising is going well this year and we have already had several successful and well-attended events. We still have two more events this year – the coronation party at the pavilion on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May and the Silent Disco on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June. The committee is still looking for advertisers to be included in the Feast Week programme and so if you would like to advertise or know of someone who would like to do so, please get in touch. The 200 club continues to be a steady source of income for Feast Week, and we invite you to join – please contact the committee for further information. We are looking forward to Feast Week this year which will be from 23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> July and have a Wild West theme. We hope to see you all there!

Report from Hilton Action on Traffic (HAT) – Andy Bush

It has now been over a year since the 24-hour HGV ban was approved and announced and nearly 10 months since it came into force and thought that it was a good time to give you another update, sorry it is a little long but a lot has been happening.

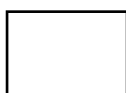
I thought it would be worthwhile covering a little history for those that are new to the village and maybe not aware

HAT (Hilton Action on Traffic) was formed approx. 22 years ago by Bill Halford to work on making the village safer. He led the charge of data collection, lobbying of CCC etc and the first unfortunately unsuccessful attempt for a 24-hour weight restriction. Many of you know Bill, it was a shame he left the village before the fruits of his labours could be experienced.

As most people know that recently a number of important factors changed (New A14 built, closure of Dairy crest in Fenstanton etc) and consequently the second application was successful and, on the 4th July 2022, a 7.5T 24/7 weight prohibition order came into place.

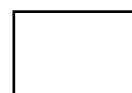
When we first heard (Feb last year) that the application was approved I contacted all of the major HGV Sat nav companies, mapping companies and fleet management and routing systems companies to ensure they were aware of the forthcoming changes and to get their data and maps up to date.

Now pretty much all have caught up (after much pressure) as long as the drivers and operators have updated their devices.



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We also contacted the police and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) for help, which was a painful process. We met with police inspectors, who promised much, but delivered nothing and was let down by them all, until relatively recently (more of that later)

Also, the police run "HGV Watch" scheme has been totally useless and because of a "software and systems update problem" they have never and still are not able to help. We wasted our time in the early stages of the ban reporting HGVs to them, which were never used. Very frustrating.

Ken and I met with the police and CCC in Shire Hall a few weeks ago and despite a convivial meeting and much nodding of heads, no help at all was forthcoming. We kept our request simple to start with, better signage at the south of the area, as there are 5 warning signs at the north end before vehicles get to the entrance of the prohibition area but NONE at the south end, but no help there, insisting that the existing signs comply with the regulations so that is just tough!

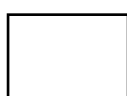
So as there was no help forthcoming and lots of HGV were continuing to use the road (probably because they knew that the police were unlikely to enforce) HAT formed a small team to monitor the road and we wrote to each company that had an HGV that was identified contravening the weight prohibition asking for the reason. We have now contacted and had responses **from over 700 different companies!** We also reported persistent repeat offenders to the [Road Haulage Association \(RHA\)](#) and [FORS \(Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme\)](#) as it contravenes their standards and are audited. Also reported to DVSA who can award [OCRS \(Operator Compliance Risk Score\)](#) points to operators which can affect their operator licence renewal. In fact, they are most concerned at this possible action.

On the whole they (the HGV Operators) were very apologetic and supportive, but their drivers came up with all sorts of "reasons/excuses" for doing it.

As we recorded all HGVs, we knew which ones were repeat offenders (and some still are) and the responsible ones have put a lot of effort in trying to get their drivers to comply, taking them right through their disciplinary processes to dismissal, if they kept doing it.

Many operators use subcontractors and agencies which make that more difficult, but some stood drivers and vehicles down for days/weeks/forever

One of the reasons for contacting them was obviously to make them (the HGV operating managers and directors) aware of what their drivers were doing (as of course they were oblivious unless they received a NIP/Ticket), but also for them to ask their drivers why they did it, so we could try and put in mitigation to reduce future occurrences.



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Top three (3) reasons given were (and sometimes still are)

- Followed Sat Nav
- Didn't see signs
- Used to be nighttime only

As I mentioned most of the HGV sat navs and fleet management systems are now up to date, so difficult excuse to use now, but poor signage is still used and does need significant enhancement.

We were having a roadside meeting with Sergeant Andy Caruana discussing what they could do to help, when an HGV came down the road, which he duly stopped and when he asked why he was using the road, the driver tried to blame the sat nav. The police had none of that as not a valid excuse, then tried the "didn't see any signs" excuse, to which Andy said "Ok, driving without due care and attention", to which the driver quickly back peddled and accepted the ticket.

So, at the start of this year, after repeatedly being let down by the police, we were put in touch with Sgt Andy Caruana, local neighbourhood policing team lead, who came and met with us in the village and quite honestly has been brilliant. As you can imagine they are hugely under-resourced, but he has done what he can, which not only is handing out tickets when possible (he and his officers (especially PC Adam Courtney) try and get to the village when they can) but he has also written to the 10 offending companies warning them of their behaviour, and implications, which has worked really well.

We are still getting between 5 and 15 HGVs through a day, so our work is still not done, and probably never will be, but this is continuous hard work by the small, but perfectly formed HAT team.

Next project Speeding, but that is another more difficult problem and for discussion at another time.

### Report from Hilton Village Hall Management Committee – Nicola Webster – Chair

This year we said goodbye to several longstanding committee members, who between them had many years service to the Village Hall. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them again for their contribution to the Village Hall. The new committee is quite small, with only seven members, but we are quite effective. We had a fabulous Christmas Extravaganza, masterminded by Helen Attwood, which was a great success and a very enjoyable evening. The committee is in the process of employing a new caretaker. The Village Hall has received a grant of £2100 to support the coronation celebration. We have also received a grant of over £9,700 for new fire doors which should be installed in the next few months.

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## Report from Hilton Community Garden Group – Claire Sarkies

It has been a privilege to be part of the Community Garden project since its beginning in the spring of 2021. With the aid of grants and donations we have been able to undertake improvements in the garden to boost its productivity and fulfil our mission to create an oasis in the village for the whole community to enjoy.

### Improvements

Since last April a car cover donated by a Hiltonian has been converted into a sizeable polytunnel specifically to grow tomatoes, chillies and peppers, and provide overwinter cover for tender plants. Two water features have been installed: a whisky barrel at the entrance stirred by a solar pump and a small pond in front of the popular bird feeding station ideal for a quick sip before or after a beakful of seeds.

We invested in a selection of perennial native plants to occupy a shadier part of the garden. It is a pleasure to see healthy looking cowslips in flower and we hope for more diversity as the summer progresses. As with the native hedging it is anticipated that these plants will encourage pollinators as well as other benign garden visitors.

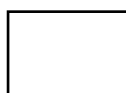
Herbs have grown very well in the garden and last year, we had more flat leaved parsley than we could find people to give it to. Visitors to the garden will now see our new herb garden in front of the fruit cage. New edging is currently being installed after a generous grant from the Cambridge Gardens Trust. This is timely as the garden is to open for the National Gardens Scheme in July, commemorated by a brass plaque on the shed.

### Community Activities

Having established a tradition of initiating activities for the village, members of the garden committee designed a floral tribute for the late Queen's jubilee celebrations in the form of a giant Union Jack made of red, white and blue petunias which were planted by families visiting The Green. This year we are planning a floral crown to welcome the accession of Charles 111. We contributed craft activities to Feast Week children's programme and have again enjoyed sessions with Rainbows and Brownies to include them in the Great Potato Challenge to be judged at the Produce Show on the 29th July.

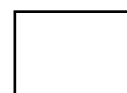
### Welcome

Members of the committee meet on Saturday mornings to tend the plot, breaking for coffee and delicious cake mid-session. Anyone who comes will be given a warm welcome. We are always delighted to welcome visitors and grateful for the teams of waterers and bird feeders and all those who have contributed by their labour and skill. If you cannot make Saturday mornings, the garden is always open, and help is gratefully received. However, it is just as gratifying to see people sitting to enjoy the peace of the garden. We hope there will be more surplus vegetables this year. Last summer's yield was low because of the drought. If we do have vegetables to offer, they will be available on Saturday mornings. We'll aim to send out messages detailing what is available.



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Report from Hilton Speedwatch – Rob Dulstone

Hilton Speedwatch is a group of volunteers supported by local police who give up their time to make Hilton a safer place by reducing speeding in the village with regular hourly sessions reporting speeding cars.

A big thank you to Alan & Pat who retired from running Speedwatch at the end of last year. Thanks to Phil for now taking on the reporting duties and Michael for maintaining the equipment.

Biggest thanks to the volunteers from the village : Jan, Mike, Peter, Sue, Aileen, Michael, Phil, Alastair

Thanks also to HAT (Hilton Action on Traffic) for maintaining the monitoring equipment and providing traffic statistics, and for their amazing effort to clamp down on HGV violations since the ban.

We are always looking for new members to help with our efforts, it only requires a couple of hours per month - if you can spare the time, please get in touch.

General Question Time

A parishioner said thank you to those individuals who give their time willingly to the village. He noted that the council tax increase for the parish council portion is 10.7% on his bill. He stated that the parish council needs to seriously look at efficiencies and savings, as these are tough times for parishioners. He stated that there should be more communicating via spectrum more about why the increase needed to be 10.7%.

A parishioner asked for the total cost of dredging spoil removal. Cllr Peter Balicki advised that this was not easy to calculate as the number of loads was dependant on the weight of the material which is not known. He advised that the parish council would be discussing this at their next meeting.

A parishioner proposed a vote of thanks for the volunteers who planted the daffodils near the church.

A parishioner asked how the plans are progressing with regards to the churchyard being full to burials in the next 5-10 years. Cllr Peter Balicki advised that the council has appointed a working group to look into this issue.

Chair summed up, thanked those people who contribute to the community groups and events in the village and thanked the attendees of the meeting.

There being no further business to transact the meeting was closed at 20:37.

Signed.....Date.....

[Signature box]

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